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**STATEMENT OF HONORABLE JIM WRIGHT**  
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE  
BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON LEGISLATION  
PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

April 1, 1987

Thank you for this opportunity. I have come to support the Intelligence Oversight Amendments of 1987 introduced by Chairman Stokes.

The bill makes two very simple changes in the statutes. Both are clearly consistent with what Congress intended originally. If the language proposed today by Mr. Stokes had been in the law, it is quite probable that the national embarrassment of the entire "Irangate" episode would have been avoided.

The Stokes bill (H.R. 1013) modifies Section 662 of the Foreign Assistance Act to require that all covert action "findings" be in writing. These written findings would have to be provided to the House and Senate Intelligence Committees, the Director of Central Intelligence, and the statutory members of the National Security Council prior to the initiation of the proposed covert action. The bill would retain a provision of existing law which, in certain circumstances, permits the required prior notice to be given to eight specified Congressional leaders, rather than to the full membership of both Intelligence Committees.

H.R. 1013 would also amend Section 501 of the National Security Act to tighten up the present language calling for notification in a "timely fashion" when prior notice is not given. Only in extraordinary circumstances affecting the vital interests of the United States, and only where time is of the essence, the bill would permit the Congressional notification to be deferred for "not more than 48 hours" after the initiation of the intelligence activity or the signing of the finding under Section 662.

Mr. Chairman, this is a bill that should not have been necessary. As someone who served ex-officio on the Select Committee on Intelligence for nearly ten years, I can state from experience that when the present legislation was enacted, the Congress intended that it be notified before any covert actions took place. When we used the term "timely fashion" in the law with regard to those extraordinary circumstances when time did not permit prior notification, the Congress meant a couple of days, not more than ten months.

The colossal misjudgments made by the Administration in the arms deal with Iran confirm the need for this new legislation. Had the President notified the Congress as to what he was intending to do in Iran, he might have gained a clearer understanding of the risks involved. Had the Congress received prior notification, it is certain that some of us would have advised against that unfortunate policy. The U.S. government just might have been spared this embarrassing and costly episode which continues to undercut our foreign policy.

Mr. Chairman, I commend your leadership in holding prompt hearings on this important matter. I know that you are planning the expeditious action that this issue warrants.